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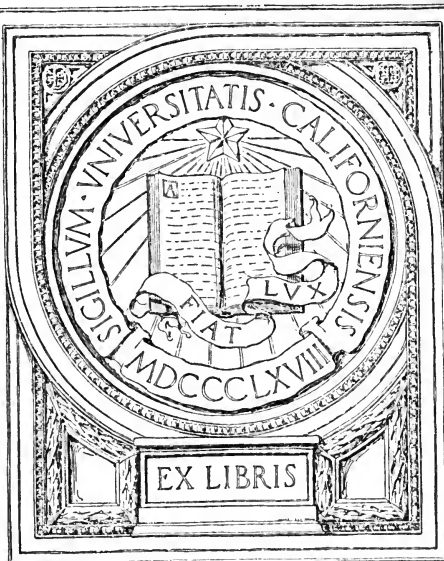
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SOUVENIRS

STANLEY KIMMEL

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Stanley Forman.



SOUVENIRS



Stanley Kimmel

Author

“Poems and Fantasies”

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*On entre, on crie,
Et c'est la vie!
On bâille, on sort,
Et c'est la mort!*
—A. de Chancel.

413167



ATLANTIC

I love the freshness of the open sea,
The blue desert, the eternity
Of silent ships. Waves madly
 embracing,
The blush of white foam on their wan
 faces,
The aftermath of passion.
Drifting mountains of golden mist,
Forests of far away clouds,
And the purple evening approaching;
The passing of caravans
Upon a phantomed canvas,
The colors of day fading.
Darkness.

BLUE RAIN

Rain in the forest and evening,
Blue rain and things which are green,
And squares where a shadow lingers,
Where Death stalks about, unseen.
Echoing roar of the cannons,
The click of the horses' hoofs,
Rattling camions passing
The shattered grey walls and roofs;
"Post de Secours" on the hillside,
Skeleton towers which loom
Far to the rear of the troopers
Passing along through the gloom.
Rain in the forest and evening,
Blue rain and things which are green,
And squares where a shadow lingers,
Where Death stalks about, unseen.

LEFT-OVERS

They were only women
Those things which stood
Before us in the drenching rain
Clasping small, frail bits
Of flesh to their breasts.
Half-naked they were, and half-starved,
Beaten and bruised and some, bleeding.
Like cattle they huddled together
For warmth. The doctors passed among
 them

Caring for those who had just given
 birth

And those whose hour was near.
They did not cry or blaspheme,
Simply looked as if thinking
Of something far away.

Soon the large wagons came,
And the ambulance corps,
And those who bury the dead.
They were all taken to the rear,
But the wagons were not very full.

About us, the ruins of the village.
Many old men and children, motionless,
And those who knew the smell
Of powder and blood and dirt.

HOPELESSNESS

What good, the coming of the morrow,
If but to tread again through blood,
And hear the trailing cry of sorrow,
And mocking Death's dull drumming
thud.

What good the sun, the starlight's
shimmer,
The cooling breeze of early dawn,
If only on the dead to glimmer,
Or cool the cheeks of those beyond.

Verdun,
1917

MORNING NEAR MORT HOMME

O'er the soil a faint ray of sunlight
gleams,
And falls on formless heaps of cold,
blue flesh.
The hills, once green, are bare and
desolate;
There, naught remains save those small
pools of blood
Which Freedom gave to Charon for
her fare
Across the bleak Cimmerian divide.
Beyond, a painted forest of rare jade,
'Neath purple clouds fringed with
Moresque design,
And great, black birds which lounge in
the mid-air.
The dawn is torn by tireless, gulping
guns,
Where Liberty, like some vain courtesan
In a red robe, struts proudly to her
doom.

TROOPS

They are passing
Over the dark ridge,
Thousands, yet all is still.
It is cold and the night is grey,
But they are a swarm of black
And tread along in silence.
Is it this one, whose sorrowful eyes
Scarcely notices us, is he the one
To be bayoneted, or is it the young man
Who smiled and said, "Americain,"
Or the three to whom we gave cigarettes,
Are they to be shot down like wild animals,
These men who thanked us for cigarettes?
Remember the man whose legs and arms
Were missing when we found him
On Hill Three-hundred-four?
(He died five minutes later)
Will these men know such suffering?
And they who were left behind,
Mothers, fathers, sisters and those
Who walk the evening paths alone,
And those who draw
Their small tin soldiers over quiet ground;

What will they do when the word is
Brought to them, when they
Tell them another victory has been won?

Jubecourt,
August, 1917

THE BURDEN

Winds are tired of their wailing,
Rains of their weeping too,
Earth of its bloody burden,
Sky of its smoky blue;
Tired of their bitter sorrow,
Tired of their hellish night,
Tired of the roar of battle,
Tired of an endless fight.

PRISONER

"I must go down now
And open the shop
The little shop where
I work for Herr Goff.
In an hour or so
She will come to buy
A loaf of bread,
(She gives me a rose
For her loaf of bread.)
She will come for
A loaf of bread, because
She gets a loaf every day
And because we are
To wed very soon, so every day
She comes to the shop.
But first I must find the keys,
The keys to the little shop
Of Herr Goff."

THE OUTCAST

He spoke to me
Continually of Yvonne
And told me how,
When he arrived in Paris
On his permission,
He had searched for her.
She was not in the quarters
They had taken after the retreat
From Revigny. But one day,
As he was walking along the
 boulevard,
She passed, gowned in black,
Silk as much as possible,
And a large hat.
Oh yes. he knew just why
She dressed like that,
And he knew—
She was smiling and talking
Very lively to the British Officer.

The day following he reported
To his post on the front.

I left him and went up to Montzeville.
When the return trip was made
I saw a man whom they told me
Was handling a hand grenade
When it exploded and killed him.
The officer cautioned everyone
Standing near us to be careful,
And gave the accident as an example.

BLUE STEEL

God!

Today I killed a man.

I stuck him through

And saw his blood spurt.

His flesh was like warm butter,

Heard him cry and say something

Which I did not understand.

He fell and took my gun with him,

And then—I thought of Liege,

And did not give

A damn.

THE DEAD

We looked at the dead
And wondered if they knew
The perfumed sweetness of rest,
And the softness of the dying day.
We wondered if they could hear
The distant roar of the cannon.
Those things which were once men,
Those pieces of human junk,
Stacked upon one another.
One without a head;
One whose limbs had been blown to dust;
The one whom the priest told us
"They thought was an officer:"
Only a small bundle and the worms
Waiting to devour it.
The peasant's house where
Crosses were made
And the hill, shorn of its grain.
The sound of the picks,
And the falling of dirt.

Bois de Bethelainville

THE FIFTH DAY

The mud was over our boot-tops
And the rain still falling.
Some of the men were out of it already,
And many more near the point of being
sent back.

Our hearts were steeped
In the slime as we stood
There waiting, waiting, days of it,
With the shells pouring in upon us,
And the gas, when the wind was right.
But the S. A. sent up
Hot drinks and tobacco,
Which helped to keep the men going.
When the damn thing was over
The Red Cross gave warm clothing
To those who were left.
The nurses smiled in the rooms
And cried in the hall-ways.
A hospital is a very peculiar place.

IN THE HOSPITAL

(Paris)

From the balcony
I see the courtyard below me,
And the walls round about,
Dotted with windows,
And those who gaze from white
 covered beds.
Near the fountain are two Frenchmen.
One, a leg and arm missing, the other,
 blind.
They are talking in low tones,
But they do not smile.
The sky is clear,
And the sun peeps over
The red tile roof.
A man in white, walks
Slowly toward them
Holding his hand to his lips.
The Frenchman sees him and calls,
"How is Jean, how is my brother?"
"Ah, Monsieur, all is finished."
The man bears his face
In his only hand while
His comrade speaks very softly,
But he does not smile.
The sky is clear,
And the sun peeps over
The red tile roof.

CAFE IN RUE SAINT HONORÉ

The day glimmers
And the lights of evening flicker about.
Two old men sit by the window
Slowly shuffling cards across an iron
table.

Outside a group of soldiers carouse
And throw their half-drunken
Glances at those who pass.
High wheeled carts roll drowsily
Along the rue Saint Honoré
Like some aged man
Bound-up in a heavy coat.
Long, black veils of the women
Color the atmosphere.
Night is coming on.
Tomorrow there will be more black
veils,
Then the night again.

THE DANCER

(Boulevard de Clichy)

Hi, with the dance!
The tambourines tinkle,
A girl in green,
Like an opiate queen,
Glides o'er the mall
As a snake on the wall.

Hi, with the dance!

Give me a cigarette!
The police are asleep
In Pigalle street,
Where good people go
To church and pray,
(Their gowns they must show.)

Hi, with the dance!

Monsieurs;
Vingt sou, s'il vous plait,
And the minx will prance
In her serpentine trance.
Ah, merci, merci,
Strike up the tambourines.

Hi, with the dance!

AN OLD MAN

“Maps, maps,
Maps of Paris,
Buy a map,
Maps for the English,
You take one, Monsieur—
I am a Belgian, and you see,
Here I was slashed on the cheek.
When a young man,
I worked in England,
My three sons were killed the first
year,
And two daughters led into Germany.
I have never heard from them.
I am very old;
My life is cheap—
So are the maps.
Monsieur?
Thank you! Thank you!”

OCTOBER

(Bois de Boulogne)

O'er all the sky breathed a calm autumn
twilight,
The landscape drowsed in its veiled
auburn glow,
When you came gliding through pale,
silver shadows,
An image of some exquisite Watteau.

Thy voice was low in the fast-fading
evening,
As music of harps in the forest dim,
It might have been a chanson of
Debussy,
Or sighing of leaves, sensitively slim.

The delicate notes of the dryades' flutes,
Ne'er echo such charms in their fairy
flight,
As the soft, flowing words which hushed
e'en the trees,
And left them to dream in the sylvan
night.

An Aphrodite in cloaked Grecian marble,
Swan-like and holy in this woodland
place;
Had Phidias known such enchanting
beauty,
His stone would have held thy immortal
grace.

RUE DE L'HOTEL DE VILLE

Like an old hump-backed woman
With heavy feet, you pass,
Carrying huge lamps
Upon your aged shoulders.
Creeping, crawling, staggering,
On to the river.
Your shoes are worn,
And your clothes smell of centuries,
You are a mother of criminals and saints.
Your breath comes in jerks,
And is like the foul air of a damp cellar.
Your hair is musty with cobwebs,
Yet you have defied Time.
But Time is a poor, weak thing.

MADMEN

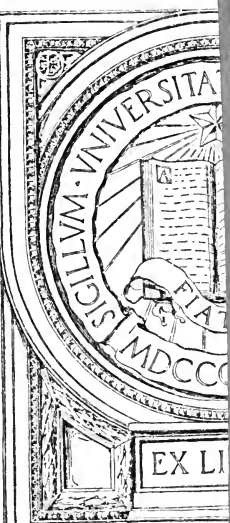
(Quos Deus vult perdere, prius dementat)

Speak not of peace nor heed the mad-
man's plea,
For madmen sail upon a crimson flood,
Their galleys glide o'er streams of
Freedom's blood,
That they may rend the emblem of
Democracy.
They wander far, across a hopeless sea,
To do the biddings of their paltry
kings,
Who gloat with lust and vain imaginings
Of a world bound by false theocracy.
O madmen, think you, France can e'er
forget
Her mute cathedrals mid the seething
towns?
Will Belgium cringe beneath your
servile threat,
Or fear the spectre of your braggart
crowns?
Think you, that Liberty 'neath her
white flame,
Will yield her rich inheritance and
name?





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